UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2000/165
28 April 2000

ENGLISH
Original: SPANISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 12 (a)

INTEGRATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Note verbale dated 28 April 2000 from the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations with headquarters in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (secretariat of the Commission on Human Rights) and has the honour to refer to the comments made by the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Bertrand Ramcharan, and later published in document E/CN.4/2000/151 in reference to the comments of the Cuban authorities contained in document E/CN.4/2000/131 on the report on the visit to Cuba by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba has pleasure in attaching herewith the Cuban Government's comments on the note by the secretariat referred to in the preceding paragraph.

The Mission has the honour to request, in accordance with its rights as a State Member of the United Nations, that its comments* should be issued as an official document of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights in conformity with item 12 (a) of the Commission's agenda, "Violence against women", under which the note by the secretariat was issued.

* The annex is reproduced as received, in the language of submission and in English only.

Annex

Comments by Cuba on the note by the Secretariat contained in document E/CN.4/2000/151 of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 12 (a), "Violence against women"

The Government of the Republic of Cuba is surprised at how quick the secretariat was to refer to document E/CN.4/2000/131, which contains the arguments and facts reported by Cuba in respect of the anomalies that occurred and manipulation by officials of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in relation to the report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women on her visit to Cuba.

The haste with which the comments by the secretariat were issued and published show that no serious and exhaustive investigation was conducted into the matters raised by the Government of Cuba. The secretariat also did not promise to conduct an investigation in future, as would be warranted by the serious irregularities to which Cuba drew attention.

On the contrary, document E/CN.4/2000/151 does no more than make excuses, contains no facts or arguments, does not refer to the substance of the points Cuba made and does not say whether the facts Cuba referred to are true or not.

The secretariat should be concerned not about matters of form and procedure in relation to the information provided by Cuba on internal manipulation, but about transparency and the full observance by its staff of the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the consideration of the human rights issues which were agreed on by the international community in the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993 and which have been reiterated in United Nations General Assembly resolutions.

The Office should also be concerned about the full application of United Nations rules and regulations in relation to the role of its staff.

The legal advice to which the note by the secretariat refers may be valid within the secretariat, but it is not at all applicable to the Government of Cuba, which is not subject to such internal regulations and has the right to defend itself, seek and make the truth known and require compliance with the principles that should govern the conduct of special rapporteurs and Secretariat staff.

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